

Learning Objectives

- ✦ To understand that understand good listening requires two way communication – sending and receiving a message (knowledge)
- ✦ To have practiced using open questions and listening for feelings as well as facts (skills)
- ✦ To discuss and review what good listening skills are, and how it feels when someone doesn't demonstrate that they are listening to what you are saying (attitudes/values).

Total Time
45 mins
+15mins
extension
activities

Teacher's Notes

Preparation:

- ✦ Photocopy all relevant worksheets.
- ✦ Think about what makes good communication, in particular being able to clarify or check information given, using body language such as eye contact and leaning forward / away, and the use of open and closed questions.

Ground rules: Please read this statement out at the beginning of the lesson: "In this lesson we will be covering some sensitive issues. You may be affected personally by the topic that we are discussing today, or you may know someone else who is. Please be respectful and thoughtful of others, and treat the subject responsibly. If you would like to talk to someone after the lesson, you can go to ... (please either give the contact person in the school, for example a school counsellor, or an outside number, for example Samaritans).

Resources

- ✦ Photocopy and cut out prompt cards for classroom exercise 1 and 2
- ✦ [optional] Samaritans Emotional Health in Schools DVD
- ✦ [optional] Photocopies of Worksheet 1: Kate and Sarah
- ✦ [optional] Photocopies of 'Tips' for good communication and listening skills
- ✦ [optional] DVD Player.

Introduction

Briefly introduce the topic of communication by explaining that it involves two parts, speaking and listening. Or in other words, sending and receiving a message. Sometimes we can 'send' a message, but the other person does not 'receive' it in the same way that it was sent. Why might that be? The other element in communication is the context that the message is given. Context can mean the place or the person. Explain that today's lesson will use a few exercises to demonstrate how this works.

An example of how context affects how a message is received is when someone has told us something about someone that affects our view of them (eg something mean or illegal that they have done). When that person speaks to us we 'filter' what they say through the impression that we already have of them.

Time
5 mins



Starter Exercise

10 mins



The purpose of this exercise is to demonstrate that communication is a two way process. **Explain:** You are going to draw a picture. You want to know what it is but need to listen to my instructions. You may not ask me any questions during the exercise.

Read out the instructions to describe the picture of the chicken. Students should work on their own to draw what they hear, but may not ask questions. Use the big picture of the chicken to show students what they should have drawn.

- * Ask students what made the task difficult.
- * Reflect that it is because you can't check the information you are hearing. Good listening needs two way communication.

Core Activities

20 mins



1. Listening exercise

In pairs students should practice their listening skills. Hand out the photocopies of the cards 'A' and 'B' and tell the students to follow the instructions. Allow 5 minutes for them to do the exercise, and then draw the class back together to discuss.

- * How did it feel doing the exercise?
- * How did you know they weren't listening?
- * Reflect that body language (the way you sit, eye contact), asking questions, checking you have understood is all part of good communication.

2. Workplace listening

Ask what the difference is between an open and closed question. **Explain:** An open question starts with, for example, what, why, how. Closed questions are a question that only need a one word answer, like yes or no. In this exercise you will practice a conversation and you are not allowed to use a closed question.

In the same pairs, follow the instructions for 'A's and 'B's.

- * Ask 'A's to give examples of open questions that they used.
- * What is the difference between 'open' and 'closed' questions?
- * How did 'B's feel when 'A's used open questions?

15 mins

each
activity

Optional Extension Activities

1 DVD

Explain: You will listen to a recording of 2 guys talking. One guy is going through a hard time, you will rate how good his friend is at listening and why. There are 3 versions of the same conversation, we will pause in between each to discuss them. Use the worksheet to help identify what the character is doing right or wrong.

Play part 5 of Samaritans DVD – Good and Bad Listening:

- * Discuss with the class how they thought that each of the characters felt
- * Discuss what was good and bad about how they listened to each other

OR

2. Listening in Context Exercise

Read the Kate and Sarah story. Read just Part 1 first then stop and ask the class what they think that Sarah should do. Then read Part 2. Does the new information change what they think about John and Sarah? Finally, read Part 3. Do the class think any differently now?

Explain that communication is a lot more complicated than just talking to someone. It involves 3 parts, speaking (or sending a message), hearing (or receiving the message), and the context. The context can really change how we receive what someone is saying. Think about what other different contexts there are that might affect communication.

10 mins

**Reflect and Discuss**

As a group, ask students what they feel they have learned about communication and listening today.

- * Do students feel they have a better understanding of listening?
- * In particular, which exercises helped them to gain insight about listening skills?
- * How do they think they could apply what they have learned in their conversation this week?

5 mins

Summary

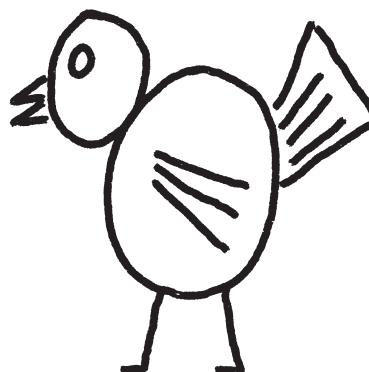
Closing discussion and feedback. Check students understand what emotional health is.

- * Recap on the lessons learned during the lesson
- * Ask if they have any questions about the lesson
- * Ensure that they know where to go for help either in school or out of school if they want to talk further about any issues raised
- * [optional] Handout 'Tips' for Good Listening and Communication Skills sheets to take home.

5 mins

Starter Exercise**Listening and Drawing**

- * Draw an egg shape
- * Draw a circle touching the egg shape
- * Draw a small circle inside the circle you have just drawn
- * Draw three straight lines inside the egg shape
- * Draw two small lines coming out of the circle that touch at one end
- * Repeat just below
- * Draw two longer lines coming out of the egg shape
- * Draw a line to join up these two lines
- * Draw three straight lines inside the shape you have just created
- * Draw two lines coming out of the bottom of the egg shape
- * Draw two short lines coming out of the lines you have just drawn.



Now do the same thing, but give more clear instructions.

Core Activity Classroom Exercise

Part 1 - Listening practice

Photocopy this sheet, and cut out the following prompt cards. The class will work in pairs. Half of the class will be 'A's and half will be 'B's.

Listening practice: Instructions for A's

Describe your last holiday to person B, or an event that you have been to recently. They will have to listen for the next five minutes.

Listening practice: Instructions for B's

Your partner (person A), will tell you about a holiday or event they went to recently. Listen for a minute or so then stop listening. Look around the room, rummage in your bag; interrupt them with comments that are totally irrelevant, anything to show you're just not interested.

Part 2 - Workplace listening

Workplace Listening: Instructions for A's

You are the boss at a local newspaper and you are interviewing person B to be a journalist. You can ask both open and closed questions - be sure to ask both. When asking open questions try to bring out the best in the candidate by really asking them about themselves. Some open end questions could be -

- * Why did you apply for this job?
- * Can you say a bit more about...
- *
- * How do you feel about...

Workplace Listening: Instructions for B's

You are applying to be a journalist at your local newspaper.
You are at the interview with the boss. You must tell them about yourself.
Talk about

- * Why you want the job
- * Any experience of working you have
- * An example of what you have done before
- * Our hobbies



WORKSHEET

Worksheet 1 - Listening in context: Kate and Sarah

Read out the following story, and ask the group what they think that Sarah should do. Then read part 2 of the story and ask again what they think Sarah should do. Does the fact that the context has changed affect their answers? Now read out part 3 of the story. What do they think now?

Part 1

"There's John, what a georgous boy" Sarah secretly thought to herself, watching the most popular guy in school playing football. "I'm sure he just smiled at me. Maybe I have got a chance with him after all". Sarah wriggled in her seat, and took another swig of Coke, trying to catch his eye and smile back. The morning practice just finished, and the guys were all heading back to the locker room. John stopped, and turned around. "Hi Sarah. What d'you think of the game?" "Great" she replied, hiding a blush, and feeling her heart beating a little faster. "You going to Frank's place tonight with the rest of the gang?" he continued. "erm ... not sure". Sarah managed to look him in the eye briefly. "Well, I was really hoping you were" He continued, "in fact, I was hoping we could go together. What do you think?"

Ask the group what they think Sarah should do.

Part 2

Before Sarah could answer, her friend Kate ran over and landed in a heap of giggles on the seat next to her. "Ah! found you at last! Thought you'd gone home." John turned to Sarah with a wink and said "let me know" and walked away. "What was all that about" Kate enquired eagerly, straightening herself in her seat and leaning eagerly towards her. "Oh" replied Sarah, blushing again, and looking away to avoid Kate's eager eyes. "He was just asking me to go out with him this evening". "Don't do it!" Kate exclaimed, almost interrupting her before she finished what she was saying. "Why not?" Sarah continued quizzically. "He's such a player!" Kate went on. He's already been out with Kim, Laura and Stacy this year. He just goes out with someone for a couple of weeks and then drops them. I just don't want to see you get hurt that's all."

Now that Sarah has heard Kate's side, have you changed your opinion of John. Now what do you think she should do?

Part 3

At lunch Sarah decided to hang out with Jess and Tom for a change. "I've got to let him know today in math" she mused, watching a couple of sparrows fighting over a half empty packet of crisps on the floor nearby. "earth calling Sarah", it was Jess. "You seem a bit pre-occupied. Anything bothering you?" "Oh it's John. He asked me out tonight, and I was all excited at first, until Kate warned me off him. She said he's a player". Tom and Jess laughed in unison. "What!" Sarah demanded, looking at them both irritably, "What's so funny?" "Everyone knows Kate's been after John for months" Tom chuckled, "she's just jealous that he's taken an interest in you and not her, that's all!"

Ask what the group think about Sarah's situation now? What are your thoughts about Kate? What do you think about John now?

WORKSHEET

Tips for good communication & listening skill

React and short words of encouragement:

Show you are listening by nodding, and using short words - "mmm" "yes" "I see" "Go on".

Be sympathetic:

"That must have been difficult", "Sounds like you've had a bad time" can help.

Choose an open question:

Use questions starting with how, what, where, why and who to encourage your friend to talk.

- ✿ What that was like?
- ✿ How do you feel about ...?
- ✿ What's happening now?

Avoid closed questions:

These are questions that only need one word answers. They can stop a conversation flowing. Examples:

- ✿ Are you upset? - Yes.
- ✿ Do you think you'll tell her or not? - Not.

Don't be afraid to ask:

If they don't want to talk about it they will say so.

Show positive body language:

The way you sit or stand can encourage someone to feel relaxed around you, and that you want to hear what they have to say.

- ✿ Be relaxed but show you are concentrating on what is being said. For example, relax your arms don't cross them. Sitting slightly forward, and tilting your head means you are listening.
- ✿ Lots of eye contact but don't stare.
- ✿ Smiles and nods where appropriate

Listen and look for clues:

What are the facts? What else might they mean? What have they been feeling? Did they mention something in passing which they are hoping you'll ask more about?

Do you know what I mean?

Don't someone that you understand, show them! Do this by summarising what they've said. If you don't understand, ask them to clarify.

- ✿ So do you mean?
- ✿ If I'm hearing you right what you're saying is...

What to say when someone gets upset...

Don't try to say too much or solve their problems, sometimes just listening or even just being there with them is enough.